

What Every African-American Man Should Know About Stroke



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of Community Health*



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African-American men often don't like to talk about their health problems. They may not see a doctor until serious problems have developed. This makes prevention of illness and treatment difficult.

Understanding more about your body and how it works can help you develop a healthy lifestyle. This can prevent illness or disease. The major risky health behaviors are smoking, alcohol and substance abuse, lack of exercise, poor diet, unsafe sex and not wearing seatbelts in cars. These are things that can lead to illness, disability, and death.

Stroke or "brain attack" occurs when there is a sudden loss of blood supply to the brain. This can be caused by blocked blood vessels or blood vessels that burst. Strokes can result in permanent disability or death. It is the fifth leading cause of death for African-American males. Some symptoms of a stroke include:

- sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially if it's only on one side
- sudden loss of your sight, especially if it's only in one eye
- sudden loss of speech
- sudden falls
- dizziness

Risk Factors:

High blood pressure causes roughly 25 percent of all strokes. Other major risk factors are a high fat diet, smoking, and little or no exercise.

What You Can Do:

Improve health behaviors:

- stop smoking
- drink only in moderation if at all
- don't use illegal drugs
- start a regular exercise program approved by your doctor
- eat a low-fat diet

You Can Make the Difference:

Staying informed about your health and avoiding risky health behaviors are vital in fighting the health problems black men face today. Develop a plan that works best for you.

